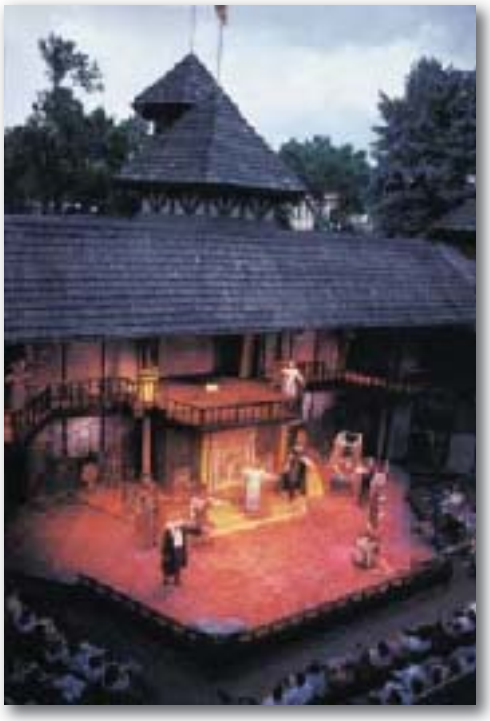
ADAMS MEMORIAL THEATRE



History

Dedicated on opening night in 1977, the theatre is named for Luella and Thomas Adams, early settlers who fostered the arts in Southern Utah [NOT AFTER FRED ADAMS, Founding Producer of the Utah Shakespearean Festival]. They were also the parents of Grace Adams Tanner, who, with her husband, the late O.C. Tanner, donated the fountain in front of the Auditorium building. The octagonal shape and stonework in the fountain are similar to the shape of this theatre. The Tanners have made major contributions to the Adams Theatre, as well as Southern Utah University over the years.

The theatre was designed by Douglas N. Cook, one of the Festival's producing artistic directors, and by Max Anderson of the Utah State Division of Facilities Construction and Management [DFCM]. Cook and his associates did extensive research on Elizabethan theatres, including the former Globe Theatre in London where Shakespeare and his acting troupe originally performed.

Architectural records of the Globe Theatre are incomplete, so they examined old renderings, manuscripts, diaries, and other documentation; analyzed the musical practices in Elizabethan theatre and the physical demands of Elizabethan plays. Experts say that the features of our stage are quite similar to those of the Globe Theatre, but it's not a duplicate. Still, it's close enough that in 1981 the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation] selected the Adams Shakespearean Theatre for its Shakespearean segment of the show "All the World's a Stage." The theatre seats 887. Most of the time the theatre is completely full. In 2002 The Festival played to approximately 148,000 attendees.

This theatre was made possible by private donations and grants. If you look on the seats, plaques on the arm-rests are names of the people who have donated to the Adams building and development project.

Some improvements, such as work on the lighting system and the landscaping, were paid for by public allocations. In 1967, the first estimate of the building was only $18,000. Because of inflation, design changes and additions, and new computerized lighting systems, by the time it was actually completed, the final cost was $1.4 million.

Fun Facts

- In February of 2000 the light booth caught on fire. A ready-to-go fire suppression system saved the building.
- In 2000 The Utah Shakespearian Festival won the Tony Award for Best Regional Theatre.
- Within a few years, the Adams Theatre will be replaced by a similar theatre, which will include wider seats, and a retractable roof.
- The Latin phrase, "Tu mundus ailes on," appears on the sign at the front of the theatre which means "All the world's a stage," which is a quotation from William Shakespeare's " As You Like It."

Experiences with this building or departments I will use to Personalize My Tour.

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